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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to determine the state of the art in adult basic educational programs funded by the state-administered programs of the Adult Education Act (Public Law 91-230). Data for the study were gathered through mail surveys of state educational agency directors of adult education (100 percent), a random sample of 420 local directors of adult education, plus on-site visits to randomly selected local projects that included interviews with project directors, randomly selected teachers, representatives of community agencies, and students. The study clarified the fact that the act supports not a single, uniform program but three distinct programs: adult basic education (ABE), adult secondary education (ASE), and English as a second language (ESL). The study found that adults who participated in adult basic education were relatively young with diverse ethnicity and that women outnumbered men. Students were most likely to be seeking a secondary school equivalency degree or proficiency in the English language. The study also found that programs cover diverse subjects and use a vast array of learning formats, methods, and techniques. Individualized instruction was the dominant approach in adult basic and secondary education, while a combination of group and individualized instruction was dominant in English-as-a-second-language programs. Competency-based educational techniques were also popular. The study found that about 40,000 instructors taught adult education, most of them part-time and that most of them had more than three years of experience in teaching adults. The study concluded that the projects had been successful and that, for the future, programs should be more clearly targeted for helping local projects serve the population groups. (KC)

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STATE OF THE ART IN ADULT BASIC EDUCATION

by

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INTRODUCTION

In presenting the State of the Art in Adult Basic Education, I am not addressing all of adult basic education in this country. Rather, I am referring only to the adult basic education supported by the State-administered program under the Adult Education Act, Public Law 91-230, as amended. While this does not encompass ALL of adult basic education, it does include MOST of it. Excluded are some ethnically and community-based programs, some volunteer programs, significant immigrant basic education programs (especially church-supported), and some networks such as OIC.

The programs reported here provided educational services to approximately 2.2 million out-of-school adults 16 years and older. Federal, State, and local funds reported in support of these programs total approximately $200 million.

EVOLUTION OF THE CURRENT PROGRAM

Before examining data which delineate the current program, it is helpful to touch upon several evolutionary points in the history of the legislation and the program, the latter in its nineteenth year.

The first point relates to the embedded assumption in the Adult Education Act about the nature of basic skills education. Basic skills may be viewed as either an end in itself or as a means to another end. Viewed as an end in itself, basic skills are seen simply as good for everyone to have. As the definition of "adult basic education" contained in the Act reveals, basic skills education is seen as a means to human development rather than as an end to be sought for itself.

> (c) The term "adult basic education" means adult education for adults whose inability to speak, read, or write the English language constitutes a substantial impairment of their ability to get or retain employment commensurate with their real ability, ... to improve their ability to benefit from occupational training and otherwise increasing their opportunities for more productive and profitable employment, and to make them better able to meet their adult responsibilities.

The last clause, "to make them better able to meet their adult responsibilities," clearly points to "basic education" as one of the elements related to adult development.

The second point relates to a significant program development, namely, the Adult Performance Level study completed in 1976. While this study has most recently been publicized in relation to the data it yielded as a measure of the number of functionally illiterate adults in the United States, this was not the primary purpose of the research. The primary purpose was to systematically identify the educational requirements for adult functioning in the decade of the 1970's. Social science research techniques were employed in an attempt to define these educational requirements with enough specificity to become the aims and goals of an evolving adult basic and adult secondary level education system. The sixty-five "objectives," as the researchers termed them, became the basis for curriculum and materials development, testing strategies, staff development, and delivery systems. In a few words, they became the foundation for the evolving adult education system.

The final point in the evolution of the current program is contained in the 1978 amendments to the Adult Education Act. The first two purposes of the Act were significantly amended to reflect and to operationally re-emphasize the two points just explicated.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Sec. 302. It is the purpose of this title to expand educational opportunities for adults and to encourage the establishment of programs of adult education that will --

(1) Enable all adults to acquire basic skills necessary to function in society,

(2) Enable adults who so desire to continue their education to at least the level of completion of secondary school, and

(3) Make available to adults the means to secure training that will enable them to become more employable, productive, and responsible citizens.

The underlined words indicate those portions added to the Statement of Purpose by the 1978 amendments. The new first purpose both re-emphasized the view of basic skills as a means to adult development and the operational dimensions of adult functioning initiated by the Adult Performance Level study. The addition of the words "who so desire" to the second purpose was further designed to connote that secondary level equivalency did not have to be the explicit goal of all those receiving services under the Act. Before 1978, this second purpose -- without the additional words -- was the stated first purpose. Under the inertia supplied by State educational agencies, specified in the Act as the administering organization, the adult education program was becoming the captive of the content of high school equivalency and the format of certification. Becoming rather highly successful within this context, those referred to in the 1978 legislative history as "the least educated and most in need" were in danger of being further neglected in favor of those who had experienced sufficient success during their traditional educational years to again be attracted to high school completion or its equivalency.

To further emphasize the de facto expansion of the still developing program, the 1978 amendments also required that the program significantly expand

> the delivery of adult education services ... through the use of agencies, institutions, and organizations other than the public school systems.

This requirement was buttressed by explicit mandates to include a host of non-public-school agencies and organizations "in developing and carrying out the (State) plan."

These basic re-directions were based upon the experience of the adult education program to that time. It is interesting to note that at approximately that same time, Hunter and Harman in their landmark study of adult literacy were calling for increased programs related to "community-based initiatives." This study, funded by and written for The Ford Foundation, was later published by McGraw-Hill in 1980.

THE PROGRAM TODAY

The most reliable data describing the current program supported under the Adult Education Act come from a 1980 evaluation by Development Associates, Inc. of Arlington, Virginia. Under a contract by the then Office of Education, Development Associates were commissioned to conduct a state-of-the-art-and-practice study of the Adult Education Program primarily in relation to the new requirements of the 1978 amendments. The study was designed to be a descriptive baseline study against which later analyses could assess the effectiveness of the required changes.

Data gathered through this study were from two major sources: 1) mail surveys of State educational agency Directors of Adult Education -- a 100 percent survey -- and a random sample of 420 local directors of Adult Education, plus 2) on-site visits to randomly selected local projects which included interviews with project directors, randomly selected teachers, and representatives of community agencies reported to be cooperating with the projects. Randomly selected students were also interviewed, about 75 percent of whom were no longer in the program. Twenty-two State Directors also were interviewed to validate and expand upon the mail survey and to obtain specific information regarding possible measures of program impacts.

All data subsequently displayed in Table form in this report are taken from the Final Report entitled An Assessment of the State-administered Program of the Adult Education Act, prepared by Development Associates, Inc.

The Development Associates study brought new clarity to describing the State-administered program by identifying that the Act supports not a single, uniform program but three distinct programs responding to the needs of three distinct groups in the population. These programs are adult basic education (ABE), adult secondary education (ASE), and English as a second language (ESL). Each of these programs is eligible for Federal participation under the Adult Education Act and each was treated in the comparative analyses performed in the 1980 evaluation.

Functional literacy -- the possession of the essential knowledge and skills to enable an individual to function in his or her environment (home, community, workplace) -- is the product of adult basic education

and English as a second language. However, to correspond with the 1980 evaluation study and to give a more complete picture of the characteristics of, and programs for, educationally disadvantaged adults, data will also be presented as they relate to adult secondary education.

Participant Characteristics

TABLE 1
DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPANTS IN ADULT EDUCATION PROJECTS, OVERALL AND BY PROGRAM TYPE

CHARACTERISTIC	PROGRAM TYPE			OVERALL
	ABE (%)	ASE (%)	ESL (%)	(%)
SEX				
MALE	45.6	41.1	47.4	41.2
FEMALE	54.4	58.9	52.6	58.8
AGE				
16-21 YEARS OLD	31.0	47.5	22.9	22.4
22-34	37.6	33.8	44.9	42.7
35-59	24.2	15.8	25.9	28.2
60 AND OVER	7.3	2.9	6.4	6.7
ETHNICITY				
HISPANIC	24.8	6.6	57.3	20.6
NATIVE AMERICAN	1.1	1.4	0.1	1.2
ASIAN/PACIFIC	1.7	0.1	31.1	7.5
BLACK, NOT HISPANIC	22.5	18.7	0.5	27.4
WHITE, NOT HISPANIC	49.9	73.2	11.1	43.3

The federally assisted State-administered program seeks to provide needed services to eligible adults from all segments of the population. Demographic characteristics of individual participating adults in general and in relation to the specific program type are arrayed in this Table.

Participating adults, overall, may be described as relatively young, with diverse ethnicity, and with women outnumbering men. As has been the case since the inception of the State-administered program, women constituted more than half (58.8 percent) of the participants.

In general, adults in the 22 to 34 year age range constitute the largest proportion of adult education participants, 42.7 percent of all participants.

About one-quarter of the participants fall in the 16- to 21-year range (22.4 percent). The 35- to 59-year range comprises slightly more than one-quarter (28.2 percent). Considering age characteristics by program type, the percentages show some variations for young participants in adult secondary education. Adults in the 16- to 21-year age range account for 47.5 percent, or nearly one-half, of the adult secondary education participants. In all probability this higher percentage reflects the use of the adult secondary education program by high school "dropouts" or "pushouts." Among the estimated 2.3 million people joining the pool of functional illiterates each year are nearly one million classified in these categories of "dropouts" or "pushouts". While the adult secondary education program is not an alternative to a high school education, it provides educational opportunities to meet diverse needs of that age population. As adults age, their likelihood of enrolling in an adult secondary education program decreases.

The distribution of participants with different ethnic backgrounds also varies among the three program types -- adult basic education, adult secondary education, and English as a second language programs. Overall, slightly in excess of two-fifths (43.3 percent) of the adult participants are white; just over one-quarter (27.4 percent) are Black. Hispanics comprise one-fifth (20.6 percent) and lesser representation by other ethnic groups -- Asian or Pacific Islanders comprise 7.5 percent; Native Americans, 1.2 percent.

The picture is quite different when we view ethnic participation by program type. Whites make up about 50 percent of the adult basic education program and 73 percent of the adult secondary education program, but only 11 percent of those in English as a second language programs. As would be expected, Hispanics and Asian and Pacific Islanders dominate English as a second language program participation. Participation in adult basic education programs is about equal for Hispanics and Blacks, but about three times as many Blacks as Hispanics participate in adult secondary education programs.

The educational backgrounds of participants also vary widely. The 1980 evaluation reported about one-third had completed seven to nine years of formal schooling; one-third, ten to twelve years; most of the remaining third in English as a second language programs.

Programmatic Differences

Like demographic characteristics, programmatic characteristics among participants in adult education projects show distinct differences among the adult basic education, adult secondary education, and English as a second language program types.

TABLE 2

PROGRAMMATIC DIFFERENCES AMONG PARTICIPANTS
IN ADULT EDUCATION PROJECTS, OVERALL AND BY PROGRAM TYPE

CHARACTERISTIC	PROGRAM TYPE			OVERALL
	ABE (%)	ASE (%)	ESL (%)	(%)
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	12.6	5.3	5.5	8.6
SECONDARY SCHOOL	14.4	44.1	32.5	29.0
COMMUNITY COLLEGE/ VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL SCHOOL	5.5	12.2	15.0	9.8
ADULT LEARNING CENTER	26.3	25.9	33.8	27.6
OTHER	41.2	12.2	13.3	25.1
INDIVIDUALIZED INSTRUCTION	37.7	66.4	13.8	44.0
GROUP INSTRUCTION	27.1	21.5	41.8	27.7
COMBINATION	35.2	12.1	44.4	28.2
MAINTAIN SPRING TO FALL ENROLLMENT	22.0	18.5	23.5	21.0
DO NOT MAINTAIN SPRING TO FALL ENROLLMENT	78.0	81.5	76.5	79.0

The 1978 amendments to the Adult Education Act were quite specific and placed major emphasis on expansion of the delivery system. Underserved segments of the adult population were not always provided the most appropriate settings and opportunities to take full advantage of educational offerings.

The 1980 evaluation study considered instructional setting in presenting programmatic differences. The overall distribution of participants by class location showed only 38 percent in elementary and secondary schools. However, 62 percent of the participants received instruction in some other type of facility. One of the more popular facilities was the adult learning center, with 27.6 percent of the total participants.

Prior to the release of these findings, there was a popular misconception that the Adult Education Program primarily offered traditional classroom programs in traditional school surroundings.

Examining the data on class location for the program types indicates that adult basic education participants were most likely to attend classes held in a community-based facility such as a community center, church, hospital, or private home. This is in contrast to adult secondary education participants who predominantly attended programs offered in secondary schools. Adult learning centers hold a slight edge over secondary schools for serving English as a second language participants.

Like the instructional setting, the content of adult education is diversified. Programs cover diverse subjects and use a vast arrsy of learning formats, methods, and techniques. Programs are formulated to address new subjects, new audiences, and to utilize new methods. Programs grow largely from individual and local impetus. This growth is directly related to the needs and aspirations of the adult learner.

As Table 2 illustrates, individualized instruction is the dominant approach in both adult basic education and adult secondary education programs. The study showed that such instructional approach was twice as dominant in adult secondary education programs (over 66 percent). This is predictable due to the higher degree of independent learning which is possible and supported at the secondary level.

Group instruction or a combination of individualized and group instruction is dominant in English as a second language programs. These instructional methods are quite appropriate for gaining oral and aural English language proficiency as emphasized in basic entry-level classes. Many speaking and listening skills are more easily taught and learned in a group setting with face-to-face communications with instructors and between or among students of limited English proficiency. The classroon mode is more conducive to practice through oral exercises. Reading and writing skills are usually introduced in the more advanced level classes of English as a second language programs.

Competency-based Adult Education

Adult education teachers attempt to accommodate individual and unique student needs through the use of a variety of strategies. The competency-based instructional strategy is one technique used to help

TABLE 3

VIEWS OF COMPETENCY-BASED TEACHING OF PROJECT DIRECTORS AND TEACHERS

	% PROJECT DIRECTORS	% TEACHERS
SHOULD BE BASIS OF ENTIRE PROGRAM	28.5	22.8
USE ONLY WITH SPECIFIC PROGRAM TOPICS	50.5	49.2
SHOULD NOT BE USED AT ALL	2.7	6.0
UNFAMILIAR WITH STRATEGY	11.4	18.8
OTHER	6.9	3.2

The 1980 evaluation surveyed project directors and teachers about current attitudes and practices relating to the use of competency-based teaching in adult education. It reported that 75 percent of teachers and local project directors believe this strategy can play a useful role in helping to instruct adults. About one-fourth of the respondents believed that competency-based teaching should be the basi of the entire adult education program. Another 50 percent of these project directors and teachers suggested that this strategy be used only with specific program topics. However, 25 percent of teachers and 14 percent of project directors were either unfamiliar with competency-based teaching or were opposed to it.

In Fiscal Year 1984, Dr. Paul Taylor of Kansas State University conducted a Competency-Based Adult Education (CBAE) State-of-the-States Survey. For that survey, Dr. Taylor used a commonly accepted, concise definition of competency-based adult education. He defines it as "a performance-based process leading to demonstrated mastery of basic and life skills necessary for the individual to function proficiently in society." Data from this study show no major shifts from 1979 responses. The one exception perhaps is the case of California which now requires that all adult education programs be competency based or that there be a plan to become so within three years. California's combined Federal, State, and local reported expenditures for the State-administered adult education program account for almost 30 percent of the total reported expenditures for all States.

Dr. Taylor's study indicates that 34 States reported a strong or moderate commitment to a competency-based adult education process, nine reported little, and one State reported no commitment. Nineteen States reported funding teacher training and/or special experimental demonstration projects relating to this process under the State discretionary authority of section 310 of the Adult Education Act. Such expenditures have remained about the same for the past three years -- $1.3 million yearly.

Another important area of competency-based adult education is the alternative adult diploma program. These programs award high school diplomas that are either entirely or partially competency based. They give credit for such areas as applied performance, prior learning, and work experience.

According to information recently reported to the Division of Adult Education Services, U.S. Department of Education, the number of graduates from alternative adult diploma programs increased by 8 percent over the last two years to a total of 14,316. Increases in the number of graduates were reported by 86 of the 141 programs surveyed.

Thus, there appears to be widespread support in adult education for competency-based teaching broadly defined.

TEACHER CHARACTERISTICS

Instruction received by adult education participants is a major factor toward ensuring that the programs are successful in meeting individual learner needs. Motivation and encouragement to participants are prime ingredients for that success. And responsibilities for motivation and encouragement fall in the main to the instructional staff. Often the adult participants have a background of failure in school settings. The adult education instructor must encourage the participant by providing early success experiences, by assisting the participant in setting attainable objectives, and by providing life-related instruction and instructional materials. The instructor should provide individualized teaching to build self-confidence and to avoid the risk of embarrassment to the participant.

A 1975 research team (Mezirow, et al, findings published in Last Gamble on Education) found that in greater proportion than those in public schools, adult education teachers have the same racial and ethnic

origins as their program participants. Three-fifths of the adult education teachers stated that teaching adults was more rewarding than teaching children. Black teachers and English as a second language teachers were found to emphasize functional content more than other teachers.

The 1980 study estimated that 40,630 instructors teach adult education. Of these, about 59 percent teach either adult basic education or a combination of adult basic and adult secondary education, 11 percent teach only adult secondary education. A little over 28 percent teach English as a second language, either alone or in combination with the other adult education level programs.

TABLE 4
TEACHER CHARACTERISTICS BY ABE, ASE, AND ESL PROGRAMS
(PERCENT OF TEACHERS)

	TYPE OF PROGRAM		
	ABE	ASE	ESL
SEX			
MALE	40.3	57.2	21.0
FEMALE	59.7	42.8	79.0
TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT			
FULL-TIME	14.0	16.9	20.4
PART-TIME	86.0	83.1	79.6
EXPERIENCE TEACHING ADULT EDUCATION			
0-1 YEAR	8.1	14.7	8.4
1-3 YEARS	29.1	36.7	24.7
OVER 3 YEARS	62.8	48.6	66.9

Teachers of adult education classes may be characterized as predominantly female (63.2 percent), part-time (77.2 percent), with over three years' experience (62.8 percent). The one exception is that there are more male than female teachers in adult secondary education programs.

Adult education teachers, like others in the profession, must perform responsible functions in addition to instruction. Teachers surveyed as a part of the 1980 study indicated that in addition to teaching they--

- counsel participants (57.1 percent);
- help recruit participants (50.2 percent);
- develop adult education curricula (45.7 percent);
- help evaluate their projects (36.7 percent);
- conduct in-service teacher training (22.7 percent);
- provide vocational counseling for participants (22.0 percent).

Few differences were noted in the performance of these ancillary tasks by teachers of the three types of adult education programs. English as a second language teachers, though, are less likely to recruit program participants but more likely to provide counseling services than their counterparts in the adult basic and adult secondary education programs.

TABLE 5
TEACHER CHARACTERISTICS BY ABE, ASE, AND ESL PROGRAMS
(PERCENT OF TEACHERS)

	TYPE OF PROGRAM		
	ABE	ASE	ESL
TYPE OF FACILITY WHERE CLASSES MEET			
ELEMENTARY/SECONDARY SCHOOL	42.7	59.8	33.1
ADULT LEARNING CENTER	19.2	32.3	32.4
OTHER	38.1	7.9	34.5
MODE OF INSTRUCTION			
INDIVIDUALIZED	56.8	52.0	29.9
SELF-STUDY OR SMALL GROUP	28.4	15.7	16.4
CLASSROOM	14.8	32.3	53.8
ASSISTED BY AIDES OR VOLUNTEERS			
YES	31.6	17.9	43.0
NO	68.4	82.1	57.0
CERTIFIED IN ADULT EDUCATION			
YES	25.6	20.7	47.3
NO	74.4	79.3	52.7

Any discussion of teacher characteristics is incomplete without considering aides or volunteers. Voluntarism, a renewed trend in educational policy, is not new to the adult education community. However, its current growth is a special effort to cope with the rate and complexity of changes occurring in society and with program budgets unable to provide services for all those seeking them.

Volunteers and aides are a valuable resource to and an integral part of a number of adult education programs. The 1980 study indicated that 34 percent of all adult education teachers had aides or volunteers to help with their instructional and related functions. Assistance by aides or volunteers was most prevalent with teachers in English as a second language programs; 43.0 percent had the advantage of such assistance. Only 32 percent of adult basic education and 18 percent of adult secondary education teachers were so assisted. Of teachers with aides, 71 percent said that their aides tutored students; 53 percent of the aides had other instructional duties.

There are several updating indicators on the subject of aides and volunteers in adult education.

First, the Division of Adult Education Services, U.S. Department of Education, has recently developed a National Adult Education Volunteer Network. This Network, now numbering 450 State and local practitioners from 45 States, fosters the sharing of ideas, materials, and technical assistance on the subject.

Another indicator is the application of State discretionary funds under section 310 of the Adult Education Act to volunteer efforts. In 1982-83, 29 projects were in this category in 18 States; total

investment was approximately $600,000. These projects facilitated adult basic education programs through recruiting and training volunteer staffs, planning and developing volunteer tutorial programs; establishing volunteer adult literacy councils, support systems for volunteer networks, and home-based tutors. Provisions have been made for tutors to teach students on a one-to-one basis in basic reading, mathematics, spelling, GED preparation, and English as a second language. The target audience for the volunteer activities includes older adults, the blind and physically handicapped, blacks illiterates, and immigrants.

Within the last year, two of these projects on effective utilization of volunteers were certified and incoporated into the National Diffusion Network with Developer/Disseminator Grants:

> Project F.I.S.T. (Functional (In-Service Training) (New Jersey -- A distinctive low-cost adult literacy program that uses trained volunteers to tutor functionally illiterate adults on a one-to-one basis. This project was validated and approved by the U.S. Department of Education's Joint Dissemination Review Panel (JDRP) on March 23, 1983.
>
> Jefferson County (Kentucky) Adult Reading Project (JCARP) -- A unique program for delivering literacy instruction and life coping skills to illiterate adults using student-centered methods and JCARP counseling designs which results in significantly increased student retention and reading gains. (JDRP approved September 1982)

Training and certification of teachers were also explored in the 1980 study. Research evidence suggests that teachers foster greater learning opportunities for adults when instructional strategies, methods, and techniques are suited specifically to adult populations rather than to children. However, most adult education teachers were trained and certified to teach children.

The 1980 study reported rates of teacher certification in adult education about double in English as a second language programs to those in the adult basic and adult secondary level programs. Likewise, English as a second language teachers were found more likely to have completed coursework in adult education than those in the other two programs. Survey responses from teachers expressed a need to work with more experienced teachers as a part of their future training.

PARTICIPANT OUTCOMES

Adults enroll in adult education programs for nearly as many reasons as there are individual participants. That is to say, for some adult education is a means of learning to read, learning to read at a higher level, or to deal with writing or computation. For others, more basic life skills such as balancing a checkbook, passing a driver's test, or voting may be the motivating forces behind their enrollment. Others may be seeking to become more proficient in the English language. And others seek to gain secondary school credentials.

For these reasons, the measurement of participant outcomes is not easy. Many participants leave the program as soon as they have achieved their personal goals. And this is as it should be, for adult education programs encourage open entry and exit.

The 1980 study obtained responses from participants on the reason or reasons they enrolled in adult education classes. Almost two-thirds (65.7 percent) of the responses fell into one of three categories. The most frequently reported reason for enrollment was the desire to obtain GED or secondary school credentials (46.2 percent). To gain basic reading, writing, and mathematics skills was second (32.8 percent), and

to learn the English language was the response of 22.3 percent. These responses fell clearly into the three levels of the adult education program, and strongly relate to enrollment in one of the three.

For adult basic education participants, gaining GED or secondary school credentials or basic skills are most important; for adult secondary education, gaining GED or secondary school credentials; and for English as a second language participants, becoming proficient in the English language.

Particularly likely to be represented among those seeking GED credentials were women, whites, and participants under 22 years of age. Among those seeking to improve their basic skills, the following categories were proportionately overrepresented: men, Blacks, middle-aged and elderly persons. Those seeking to learn English were largely Hispanics and Asians, between the ages of 22 and 34.

Because of the breadth of the purposes of the Adult Education Act, program effectiveness is best measured by participant assessment in relation to personal goals. Overall, respondents in the 1980 survey rated positively their levels of personal goal attainment. Two-fifths (41.7 percent) reported that they had successfully reached their goals. Nearly as many (38.0 percent) reported that their goals had been partially attained. Only one-sixth (16.6 percent) reported not reaching their personal goals. These responses indicated that goal attainment was less likely among participants who attended classes in elementary schools, secondary schools, and adult learning centers than

among those attending other instructional settings (77.4 percent vs. 86.0 percent). This finding is particularly interesting in light of the emphasis on adult education delivery outside of the public school system as provided through the 1978 amendments to the Adult Education Act.

TABLE 6
PERCEIVED GOAL ATTAINMENT BY PROGRAM TYPE

PROGRAM TYPE	GOAL ATTAINMENT (% OF RESPONDENTS)			
	SUCCESSFUL	PARTIALLY SUCCESSFUL	NOT SUCCESSFUL	DON'T KNOW
ABE	44.1	36.2	15.7	4.0
ASE	49.2	28.3	21.3	1.6
ESL	23.7	57.5	14.0	4.8

Perceived goal attainment by program type is also discernible from the study. Positive attainment (successful and partially successful) was reported as about 80 percent for adult basic education, 77 percent for adult secondary education, and 81 percent for English as a second language programs. Adult secondary education participants registered the highest successful attainment (49.2 percent) as well as the higher unsuccessful attainment (21.3 percent). This suggests that criteria used by adult secondary education participants are clearer than those used by the other two program levels. The criteria used by adult secondary education participants presumably is the GED test and whether they passed it.

Specific Outcomes of Participation

In addition to the general perceptions of goal attainment, the 1980 study analyzed specific outcomes of adult education program participation. These are displayed in Table 7 as participant responses. Improved self-concept ranked highest, being reported by nearly 84 percent. This response regarding self-concept or self-esteem is consistent with project directors' and teachers' perceptions of the most likely gain by participants.

The relatively low gain relating to job position may not accurately reflect whether adult education participants made job related gains. Less than 8 percent of the respondents had cited employment as a reason for their enrollment; almost 6 percent said they hoped to get a better job. Further assessment of employment-related gains attributed to adult education program participation is suggested by the study and appears to be in order.

TABLE 7

SPECIFIC OUTCOMES OF ADULT EDUCATION CLASSES

IMPROVED ...	YES (%)	NO (%)	DON'T KNOW (%)
SELF-CONCEPT	83.7	9.6	6.7
READING	74.6	22.3	3.2
MATHEMATICS	69.0	27.3	3.7
WRITING	66.2	29.0	4.8
FAMILY RELATIONS	50.9	33.4	15.7
LIFE SKILLS	25.1	61.8	13.0
JOB POSITION	17.7	68.6	13.7

Based on overall findings of the 1980 study, it appears that special efforts aimed at retention of participants, increased attendance, and delivery of educational services in non-school facilities may increase participant goal attainment.

Conclusion

The concluding statement in the 1980 study says in part "the government's money had been well spent. Project staff were working and participants were learning. From a national perspective, however, what appears to be needed in the decade of the 1980's is emphasis on more clearly targeting the federal program and on helping local projects serve the targeted population groups."

A proposal for the reauthorization of the Adult Education Act is being submitted for consideration by this session of the Congress. Retention of categorical support for adult education will be proposed. Further refinements in the legislation will seek to enhance the program, to provide educational opportunities for all segments of the educationally disadvantaged adult population, and to increase participant outcomes and goal attainment.